

Remarks

The October 13, 2006 Office Action allowed claim 9, rejected claims 4 and 5 based on indefiniteness concerns, and rejected claims 1-8 as being anticipated by U.S. patent 3,791,624. In view of the amendments above and the remarks below, reconsideration of claims 1-8 is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 9 was previously indicated to be allowable. It has not been changed. Hence, it remains allowable.

Indefiniteness Concerns

Claim 4, and thus also claim 5, have now been amended to address the indefiniteness concerns. In this regard, claim 4 is now a single sentence which more clearly points out the nature of the rod's relationship to the adjacent parts.

Art Rejection

Claims 1-8 were rejected under § 102 as anticipated based on U.S. patent 3,791,624. In view of the remarks below and the above amendment, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Attention is called to paragraph [0010] of the original specification, where it was noted that the coupler in this patent provided no means for aligning and guiding an axially movable member like a rod. Hence, claim 3, drawn to this advantage, has been cancelled as its substance has been incorporated into claims 1 and 8.

While the Office Action did apply U.S. patent 3,791,624 even against claim 3, it did not explain how rod 26 passed through an aperture in coupler 58. Claims 1 and 8 (and thus now also 2 and 4-7) require the rod to go through that coupler. It does not in the reference. Rod 26 would be blocked by the base of element 58, rather than passing through it or being guided by it.

There is no central aperture in U-shaped structure 58

which receives a movable rod and guides the rod. Hence, these amended claims are clearly not anticipated.

Moreover nothing in this piece of art suggests how to have a coupler that both links the two tubes together while also accommodating and guiding a moving rod. It is quite advantageous to have a single device that serves these multiple functions.

Conclusion

Hence, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 2 and 4-8 (and continued allowance of claim 9) are respectfully requested. No additional fees are believed necessary for the entry and consideration of this amendment. However, if any are, please charge them to Deposit Account 10-0849.

Respectfully submitted,

BRIAN E. HEALY, ET AL.

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By: 

David J. Houser, Esq.
Registration No. 29,172
S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc.
Legal Department
1525 Howe Street, MS077
Racine, Wisconsin 53403
Telephone: (262) 260-2206